DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 115 267 IR 002 812

AUTHOR Little, Paul L.
TITLE Bookmobiles and Paperbacks: An Experimental Study at the Oklahoma County Libraries System with Bookmobiles Using Paperbound Book Collections and Eliminating Overdue Fines and Notices.
INSTITUTION Oklahoma County Libraries, Oklahoma City, Okla.
PUB DATE 21 Nov 75
NOTE 39p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Bookmobiles; Cost Effectiveness; County Libraries; Feasibility Studies; Fines (Penalties); Library Circulation; Library Collections; Library Research; Library Services; *Paperback Books; *Public Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Oklahoma (Oklahoma County)

ABSTRACT

The Oklahoma County (Oklahoma) Library executed a six-month experiment in 1974 on one of its five bookmobiles to determine whether: (1) patrons would accept a primarily paperback book collection; (2) the cost of unreturned paperbound books in a no-fine and no-overdue-notice situation would be cost-effective when compared to the predictable loss of hardbound books and the resulting cost; (3) a category-arranged collection (rather than a cataloged one) would prove useful and acceptable to patrons. Paperbacks were proven to be even more acceptable than hardbacks, except that patrons did want access to bestsellers available only in hardback. In spite of a higher number of books unreturned, the dollar loss per 100 circulation was lowered by the use of paperbound books. It was considered practical, however, to send overdue notices to those with a large number of unreturned books. A circulation study showed that the categorical arrangement appeared to be acceptable to patrons, but some redesign of the topical categories should be considered. The success of the experiment led to use of the same system on the other four bookmobiles. (LS)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED115267

BOOKMOBILES AND PAPERBACKS:

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

at

OKLAHOMA COUNTY LIBRARIES SYSTEM

WITH PAPERBOUND BOOKS

and

ELIMINATION OF OVERDUE FINES AND NOTICES

by

November 21, 1975

Paul L. Little

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

IR 002 812

BACKGROUND

The need for the experimental project described herein grew out of two separate developments that took place at the Oklahoma County Libraries System in 1973. The first development, early in the year, was the discovery that the bookmobile operation under a central control, although theoretically desirable, was in actuality both expensive and inefficient. A de-centralized management plan was then put into effect and each of the five bookmobiles and its personnel was placed under the direct supervision of a designated branch library, which was selected primarily for its location in or near the bookmobile's service area.

The second development occurred in the latter part of 1973 which involved a library decision to fully automate circulation procedures, acquisitions, statistics, inventory and other auxiliary functions of the library system into a computerized system. During the process of planning for this conversion, it was deemed advisable to evaluate the now de-centralized bookmobile operation and consider any changes, if needed, before the computer programming was completed.

The evaluation of the de-centralized bookmobile operation was completed by the author on December 10, 1973, which revealed (See Appendix A) that many problems continued to exist in this operation. Cost was still too high and efficiency was still too low. The study concluded (See Appendix A, p.6) that: one, the bookmobile collection should

have a higher percentage of light reading material in paperbound format; two, overdue notices and fines should be eliminated in order to reduce library costs; and three, bookmobiles should have their own independent circulation system. This report was submitted to the library administration which then requested the author to fully examine these suggestions as well as other alternatives and resubmit recommendations to the administrative staff with substantiating data from library literature and the records of the library system.

This extended study developed the following recommended alternatives with accompanying reasons for recommendation:

1. Format of Materials in Bookmobiles Collections.

   It was recommended that the materials collections of bookmobiles consist of paperbound publications for the following reasons:

   A. It was known that paperback format materials are less expensive than hardbound materials and thus offered some relief in current materials budget deficiencies.[1] Paperbound materials currently being acquired by Oklahoma County Libraries were costing an average of eighty-six cents per copy[2] in the three major categories of acquisitions as compared to the higher current costs of hardbound material being acquired in the same categories.[3]

   B. Paperbound materials were increasing in use by public libraries and proving acceptable to their patrons on a national scale[4] as well as by patrons of the Oklahoma County Libraries System.[5]

C. Paperbound materials were being published in increasing number of titles in increasing variety of topical content and sophistication.[6]

D. Experiences of Oklahoma County Libraries System with paperbound materials as well as other sources[7] indicated that the durability of paperbounds for circulation usage compared favorably with that of hardbounds.

2. Bookmobile Materials Budget.

It was recommended that funding be added as soon as possible to adequately cover loss of materials in circulation as well as adding a sufficient number of new titles. This recommendation was made inasmuch as the existing funding of bookmobiles for materials purchases was inadequate (See Appendix A, p.4).

3. Cataloging, Processing of Bookmobile Materials.

It was recommended that the paperback materials not be cataloged as are hardbound materials of the library system, and that the least processing possible be used. The experience of Oklahoma County Libraries System with paperbacks partially supported such handling; reports and recommendations from librarians in other areas, such as Roger Christian[8] and Esther J. Piercy,[9] also offered support for such an approach.

The primary reasons for the recommendation were to continue the cost effectiveness of paperback materials buying and usage

and to retain the maximum possible flexibility in devising shelving arrangements and circulation policies and procedures for the particular needs of bookmobiles.

4. Shelving Arrangement of Bookmobile Paperbacks.

It was recommended that the paperbacks should be divided into broad subject areas and within these subject areas no particular shelving order would be followed. This arrangement would not only continue the simplicity of handling of materials, but could also be expected to encourage patron browsing[10] and facilitate some readers broadening their reading interests.[11]

It was also recommended that fiction materials starting with grade five level should be integrated with adult materials. This arrangement was found desirable in an experiment of the Oklahoma County Library System when such an integration was made on one bookmobile, and also met with some success in other libraries.[12]

5. Composition of Bookmobile Materials Collection.

It was recommended that the bookmobile collections be tailored to meet patron demand and a formula for constructing these collections was devised (See Appendix B).

Experiences of bookmobile personnel of Oklahoma County Libraries System in recent years had shown that by far the major demands by patrons were for reading materials for entertainment and general information interest.[13]

6. Circulation Policies and Procedures.

It was recommended that the bookmobiles try a circulation policy and procedure that had no fines or notices for overdue materials, with the one exception that a single overdue notice would be sent to any patron who might develop an excessive record of unreturned materials. Examination of the literature dealing with overdue fines and notices showed that no study had been made on the value of overdue notices, but the literature abounded with reports and studies concerning the effects of fines and no fines policies.[14] In some cases a "no fines" policy, such as reported by Sam Clay,[15] had disastrous results. Others indicated positive experiences, e.g. those of the Windsor Public Library in Ontario[16] and the public library in New Haven, Conn.[17] These libraries experienced partial to overwhelming success in book return rates after eliminating fines from their circulation policies.

The established policies and procedures under which the bookmobiles were operated varied by whether inventoried or non-inventoried materials were involved; the former being hardbound and the latter paperbound. The number of inventoried materials circulated and not returned after 6 months past due was known to be 1.45 per cent of the number of materials circulated as was shown by a study completed by the Oklahoma County Library System (See Appendix C). There was no such figure available for non-inventoried paperbound materials circulated, though library

system personnel estimated that the rate was not significantly higher than that for inventoried materials.[18]

From evidence found in the literature and information from the staff of the library system, it seemed evident that a policy of no overdue fines or notices stood a reasonable chance of being both cost effective and efficient; specifically, in terms of comparing the estimated loss rate of paperbound materials to the known loss rate of hardbound materials.

PROBLEM

The recommended alternatives represented major changes in the bookmobile service philosophy and operations for the library system. Though experience and evidence in the literature lent positive support to these alternatives it appeared they were not studied in combination.

It was deemed advisable to conduct an experimental study combining the proposed alternatives in the operation of one bookmobile in an effort to prove or disprove the following hypotheses:

1. Paperbound books would prove significantly acceptable to patrons as a primary book format.

2. The number of materials circulated and not returned under this structure would be cost effective in terms of value of paperbound materials lost in circulation versus the predictable loss rate of hardbound materials and the resulting cost.

3. The topical category design of the bookmobile collection would prove to be significantly effective in terms of providing reading desired by patrons and each category generating a percentage of gross circulation relative to its percentage of the bookmobile materials collection.

The project began on March 4, 1974 and ran through August, 1974. The month of March was primarily a period for staff training and adjustments in operational details and was not included in the project.

In order to keep existing bookmobile patronage and usage patterns intact, no announcements or publicity concerning the project was made.

The bookmobile used for the project was selected because it served the broadest representation of patrons typically reached by bookmobiles, and because it had the heaviest work schedule among the bookmobiles.

All materials on this bookmobile, whether paperbound or hardbound, were circulated under the same experimental policy and procedure (See Appendix D) using current signature cards (See Illustration I, p.10) for charging and discharging materials. Both overdue fines and notices were discontinued for the experiment, except that patrons who developed a record of excessive non-return of books would be sent a typed overdue notice. The unique identification number given each book by its affixed label (See Illustration II, p. 10) provided the ability to certify that the same book borrowed by a patron was returned through the circulation procedures; it did not identify the book as to title, author, cost, or format.

Collection of formal data was effected through information generated by recorded circulation activities (See Illustration I, p. 10, and Appendix D.).

The materials collection had 500 additional paperbound books purchased and added, which brought the collection from 500 to 1,000 paperbound books and reduced it from 3,500 to 3,000 hardbound books. The total collection was, as regarded subject/category content, in conformity

with the predicted patron demand for various subjects and categories (See Appendix B). During the project new and varied titles in hardbound and paperbound format were added to the bookmobile as they were available, which had been the previous practice.

Materials were identified as to subject category, bookmobile/library system ownership and charging identification number by a special label (See Illustration II, p. 10) affixed to the front of each book. In all instances, hardbound materials were shelved with paperbound materials of the same category. All juvenile non-fiction books above fourth grade reading level were integrated with adult materials of the same category.

Informal data was obtained from bookmobile staff through interviews; bookmobile staff primarily noted patron reactions to the changes and staff experiences in operating the new arrangements and procedures.

ILLUSTRATION I

OKLAHOMA COUNTY 681 420

LIBRARIES

PLEASE PRINT

Name JANE DOE

Address 1234 N. Broadway

City Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Zip Code 73102

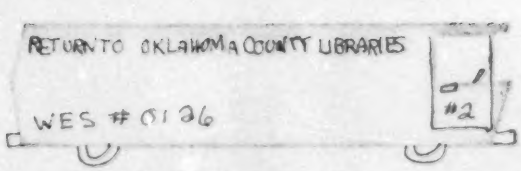
Home Phone 235-1234

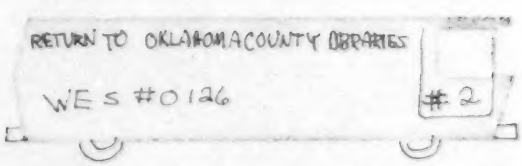
Signature Jane Doe

E-0001-HB-J
MYS-0001-PB-A
SCF-0001-PB-A

R-0002-HB-J
JF-0002-PB-J
WES-0002-HB-A

ILLUSTRATION II





TESTS OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis I

Tests of the hypothesis regarding significant acceptability of paperbound books as a primary book format to patrons were:

A. It was anticipated that the percentage share of the total bookmobile circulation accounted for by paperbound books would increase in proportion to the increase of paperbound books in the collection. Since paperbound books had a 12.5 per cent increase in the total collection, it was hoped that paperbound circulation increase would exceed or at least match that 12.5 per cent.

B. Since the hardbound books had been decreased by 12.5 per cent in the collection, it was anticipated that there would be a corresponding percentage drop for hardbound books in the total circulation figures when the circulation records for the project were compared with the circulation records for the same period in 1973.

C. It was anticipated that the total bookmobile circulation for the project period would be as great or greater than that for the equivalent period in 1973.

Hypothesis II

To test the hypothesis concerning the loss rate of materials unreturned from circulation, a comparison of the known loss rate of 1.45 per cent [20] for hardbound books and the resulting dollar cost of such

losses with the resulting loss rate of paperbound materials and their costs was chosen. For this purpose the lost materials, at both the known hardbound rate and experimental paperbound rate, was assumed to be a composite assortment in direct proportion to the structure of the library system materials collections and materials budget; this structure was 65 per cent adult, 30 per cent juvenile and 5 per cent young adult materials.

It was also assumed that the cost of books lost in circulation was at the known current average cost for purchase of materials in each category. Hardbound materials were being acquired at the following costs; adult, $5.16 per volume; juvenile, $3.64 per volume; young adult, $3.87 per volume. The average cost of acquisition for all popular paperbound materials in all categories was 86 cents per volume[21].

Comparison of the known library system materials return rate and the results of the experimental situation was facilitated by establishing a ratio between a time-lapse model of the system rate for the amount of circulation generated by the bookmobile during the trial and the actual number of books unreturned to the bookmobile from the same circulation (See Appendix C). The resulting ratio was then applied to the actual number of unreturned and their cost.

Hypothesis III

Significance tests for the hypothesis concerning the topical category design of the bookmobile collection were that:

A. The majority of the categories in the design accounted for a percentage share of the gross bookmobile circulation during the test that would be within plus or minus two per cent of the percentage portion which the category represented in total book collection. (See Appendix B)

B. The bookmobile gross circulation during the test period would represent an increase over the circulation for the same period during the year 1973.

RESULTS

As shown in Table I there was an increase in the percentage of gross bookmobile circulation generated by paperbound books of 21 per cent and a decrease of 21 per cent in the share of gross circulation generated by hardbound books during the bookmobile experiment. The level of significance for both factors had been determined as 12.5 per cent.

TABLE I

Analysis of Percentage Share of Gross Circulated by Hardbound vs. Paperbound Books: April - August

	1973	1974	Percentage Change
Hardbound	68%	47%	-21%
Paperbound	32%	53%	+21%

Unforeseeable difficulties with changing bookmobile personnel scheduling caused the months of July and August, 1974 to be uncomparable with the same months in 1973. The months of April, May and June remained valid for the study purposes, however, and these are shown in Table II. Significance to the hypotheses using circulation as a test was that no decrease in circulation would occur and greater significance would be given increase in circulation.

TABLE II

Circulation Analysis

	April	May	June
Percentage Change (Increase + or Decrease -) Compared to 1973 Performance	+1%	+3%	+5%

During the trial period a total of 3,090 books were circulated whose records constituted valid data for analysis of the return rate of borrowed materials by patrons. All books circulated were loaned for a period of three weeks, as had been the practice prior to the experiment. Since the non-return rate of borrowed materials was the factor being studied, only those books unreturned four weeks or more after the date of loan were included in the analysis; 256 of the 3,090 books loaned fell into this category.

Placing the circulation into a model based on actual return and non-return rate experience known for the Oklahoma County Library System as shown in Appendix C, it was determined that the same circulation would have produced 105 bocks unreturned four weeks or more after their original loan date. (See Table III)

This was achieved by following the model, week by week, for the months of April, May and June, 1974, placing the total circulation for each week in its respective slot in the model (i.e. the circulation of first and second week of April was placed in the 11 plus weeks category). The resulting total of 105 books was thus achieved.

TABLE III

Analysis of Bookmobile Circulation by Model of Library System Experience for Circulation of 3,090 Books

Number Expired Weeks After Date of Loan	Percentage of Weekly Circulation Unreturned	Resulting Number of Unreturned Books
11+	1.45%	8
10	1.87%	5
9	2.60%	7
8	2.76%	8
7	3.35%	9
6	3.90%	10
5	5.60%	15
4	9.00%	43
Total Books Unreturned		105

The actual experience of the bookmobile for the same circulation as that placed in the library system model was 256 books total unreturned for the same time-lapse periods. This experience was then stated as a ratio of 2.44:1, non-return rate of the bookmobile experiment to that of the library system average; in that the library system experience in the ratio is 1.45% of total circulation, the working ratio then became 3.54:1.45.

To place these results into a cost comparison the assumptive data in Item 4, page 4 of Appendix A that concerns the library system circulation loss experience was used. This data indicated that an average loss of 1,100 hardbound books, at an average over-all cost of $5,019.85, would equal an average cost of $4.56 per book lost in circulation for such hardbound materials. The average acquisition cost for all categories of paperbound materials prevalent at the time for the library system, 86 cents per volume, was used.

The comparative losses of the bookmobile experiment versus the known library system average are shown in Table IV, with average cost per volume for the library system model being for hardbound materials and the bookmobile experiment being for paperbound materials.

TABLE IV

Cost Comparison of Books Lost in Circulation: Library System Experience Model Versus Bookmobile Experiment

	Percentage Loss of Books Circulated (A)	Average Cost per Book Lost (B)	Average Loss per 100 Books Circulated (A x B)
Library System Model	1.45%	$4.56	$6.61
Bookmobile Experiment	3.54%	$0.86	$3.04

Results of the amount of circulation generated during the bookmobile experiment by the various topical categories used to design the book collection were gathered and determined by actual recording of category designation of the books circulated during the experiment. The comparative results, indicating the percentage of the book collection represented by each category versus the percentage amount of circulation that the category generated during the experiment, are shown in Table V.

TABLE V

Analysis of Percentage of Bookmobile Book Collection by Topical Categories and Percentage of Circulation Generated by Category in Experiment

CATEGORY	Percentage of Collection	Percentage of Circulation	% Difference Circulation to Collection
Adult			
Philosophy & Psychology	.02	.01	- .01
Religion	.01	.008	- .002
Social Sciences/Folklore	.05	.017	- .033
Science	.02	.02	even
Medicine	.02	.007	- .013
Homes/Home Economics	.05	.01	- .04
Business	.01	.001	- .009
Arts/Crafts	.04	.01	- .03
Music/Drama	.02	.003	- .017
Games/Sports	.04	.02	- .02
Literature	.02	.004	- .016
History	.04	.009	- .031
Biology	.06	.01	- .05
Fiction (General)	.20	.32	+ .12
Fiction (Mysteries)	.10	.09	- .01
Fiction (Western)	.15	.02	- .13
Fiction (Science-Fiction)	.05	.02	- .03
Juvenile			
"Easy" Books	.03	.15	+ .12
Readers	.02	.06	+ .04
Fiction	.05	.19	+ .14

From these results it was apparent that eleven of the bookmobile collection design categories generated over two per cent less or more circulation than their percentage share of the total collection represented.

Informal observations by bookmobile staff during the experiment indicated generally that patrons responded positively to the paperbound book format, the topical category book shelving arrangement, and the over-all informal arrangement and emphasis. Patrons apparently enjoyed the browsing aspect of the new shelf arrangement.

The majority of the few patron reactions of a negative nature that were encountered were concerned with the lack of hardbound copies of the latest "best seller" type materials being available on immediate demand on the bookmobile.

No patron objections were registered to the new circulation procedures themselves.

An incidental finding generated from the circulation records maintained during the bookmobile experiment indicated that a total of 132 different individual patrons used the bookmobile during this period. Of these 132 patrons 11 of them accounted for 52 of the 256 circulated books that were unreturned four weeks or more after the date loaned. Thus eight per cent of the total number of patrons accounted for twenty per cent of the overdue and unreturned books.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall results of the experiment confirmed the validity of implementing the paperbound book format, shelving arrangement of materials, and the accompanying policy and procedures regarding charging materials and climinating fines and overdue notices. The topical category division of the bookmobile collection was found to be a valid approach to designing a book collection relevant to the actual desires of the patrons; however, eleven of the categories were found to fail the significance test in the experiment design and thus warranted further study and redesign.

It was noted that a small minority of patrons observed during the experiment did object to having primarily paperbound format books from which to make their reading selections. The library system decided to allow for this minority problem by making all circulating hardbound titles owned by the system freely available to these patrons by either specific title requests or through general topical category groupings. Another possible answer to this problem for other libraries considering such a project would be small rotating collections of popular hardbound books.

The results regarding acceptability of paperbound books compared to hardbound books were such that the implication can be drawn that the paperbound books were not only equally acceptable but were generally preferred

in view of the large change in percentage of the two formats borrowed versus the percentage change of same in the bookmobile collection.

The results of the policy of no overdue fines and overdue notices did prove cost effective in terms of the experiment design and parameters of significance. The rate of unreturned books in the experiment did rise from the library system average of 1.45% of circulation to 3.54% however. The direct conclusion to be drawn from this is that the difference between the non-return rate of the library system and the experimental situation is the difference between overdue reminder notices being sent patrons and not being sent; however, it is possible that the change from hardbound materials being available and borrowed on the bookmobile to that of primarily paperbound materials could have influenced this pattern. It would have to be assumed that the general library public is aware of the cost value difference between hardbound and paperbound books; this awareness could have affected the non-return experience in either direction, depending upon whether the borrowing public of the library would tend to react in terms of being more conscientious in returning more costly materials or the less expensive.

In that an increase in materials not being returned did occur and that a proportionately small number of patrons accounted for a significant number of books unreturned, it was concluded that some record of patron accountability should be maintained in a library situation such as that of the bookmobile experiment. A simple system such as that used in the experiment that maintains a record of books returned

by individual patrons but only acts to notify those patrons whose records of non-return becomes excessive was felt to be feasible.

The administration of the Oklahoma County Libraries System determined that the experiment had been successful enough to warrant converting their remaining four trailer-type bookmobiles and the experimental one to all paperbound books collections. It was also determined to follow the policies concerning not charging overdue fines and not sending overdue notices, with the exception that notices would be sent to patrons whose record of non-return proved excessive. All other practices tested in the experiment were to be implemented on all bookmobiles also.

Implementation of the total conversion was accomplished in February, 1975. Re-evaluation of the five bookmobiles by the tests illustrated herein is tentatively planned at the end of one year of full operation of the system.

REFERENCES:

1. 1973 Acquisitions records of Oklahoma County Libraries.
2. Ibid
3. Appendix A, p. 4
4. Marie T. Curley, "The Buckram Syndrome," The Public Library Reporter, No. 13, 1968 (Chicago: American Library Association).
5. 1972-73 Circulation and Acquisitions Record of Oklahoma County Libraries System.
6. Eileen Lottman, "Paperback: The Illegitimate Child Comes of Age," Publishers Weekly, (June 10, 1972).
7. Marie T. Curley, loc. cit, pp. 9, 30.
8. Roger Christian, "Paperbacks are Welcomed Addition to Library," Mississippi Library News, (December, 1971), pp. 222-223
9. Marie T. Curley, loc. cit, pp. 38, 39
10. Marie T. Curley, loc. cit, p. 37.
11. Roger Christian, loc. cit.
12. Jacqueline M. Wakefield and Catherine N. Hofmann, "Certifiable Lunacy or Common Sense?" Wilson Library Bulletin, (February 1972, pp. 513-17.
13. Interviews with Oklahoma County Libraries System bookmobile personnel.
14. "Another Library Eliminates Fines, "Wilson Library Bulletin" 44:16 (Sept. 1969).

15. Sam Clay, "To Fine or Not to Fine, "Virginia Librarian" Vol. XVIII, No. 2 (Summer 1971).

16. "Ontario 'No Fines' Policy Rated a Success by Library," Library Journal (June 1, 1972).

17. "Honor System Experiments; Wins and Losses," Library Journal, 97:2681 (Sept. 1, 1972).

18. Library System Bookmobile personnel interviews, loc. cit.

19. 1972-73 Circulation Records, Oklahoma County Libraries.

20. Appendix C

21. Library Acquisition records, loc. cit.

APPENDIX A

Oklahoma County Libraries

December 10, 1973

Bookmobiles:

MATERIALS ACQUISITION AND COLLECTION;

CIRCULATION POLICY, PROCEDURES, MACHINEREY;

COSTS, PROBLEMS, PROJECTIONS.

The Oklahoma County Libraries System is currently faced with several problems regarding its bookmobiles, especially in view of the current tightening budget and the projected impact and associated changes connected with the tentatively planned magnetic sensing machine circulation system that would put all circulation, inventory and cataloging functions and records into machine-readable format for computerized automation.

Problems related to the adequacy of the materials budget allowed for the currently operated five bookmobiles to maintain adequate collections of primarily hard-bound materials, value and cost-effectiveness of overdue notice and fine policy activities, and the topical emphasis also warrant re-evaluation.

Some considerations involved in examining bookmobiles, their materials, materials budget, and circulation procedures are:

1. The number of machines needed for the new circulation system that is currently in the planning state needs to be known as we talk with potential suppliers about the possibilities of using their hardware for this system.
2. There are several problems in continuing to use machine-readable records, procedures and policies for bookmobiles;

    A. Machine rental currently $36. per month per machine = $1,728. per year for four bookmobiles for month rental per key punch machines. The current cost of $36. per month rental per key punch machines would be replaced by a cost of

approximately $265. per month per magnetic sensing machine in the proposed new circulation system.

Key-punch	Magnetic-Sensing
5 machines	5 machines
$36. per month	265. per month
$180. per month	$1,320. per month
12 months	12 months
$2,160. year	$19,080. per year

Possible costs of telephone lines in an on-line circulation system with the magnetic code sensing machines are not known exactly at this time; it is estimated that they will be somewhere between $ 25. and $50. per month per installation for bookmobile locations. In each bookmobile location if eleven of the current bookmobile schedule were wired for such on-line capabilities, cost would range between $275. and $550. per month, or $3300. to $6600.

B. Soft ware supplies (for projected 1973-74 circulation of 100,000) for key punch machines:

200,000 blue top cards = $200.
32,000 signature cards= 100.
$300.

C. It is possible that the current practice of sending overdue notices and charging fines are not cost-effective in terms of the potential book losses that might occur if these were deleted. This is especially true if books circulated were of less expensive paperbound format entirely.

D. Costs of record delivery;

There are costs involved in the necessary transporting of machine-readable records from bookmobiles at remote locations, that

are not on the regular library mail truck route, to centralized Data Processing for handling. These costs have not yet been isolated and defined.

E. Bibliographic and inventory control: the current key punch system does not allow keeping the same tight control on books that are circulated from bookmobiles as is kept from branches and central library. Among the causes of this situation are the problems often experienced with malfunctioning of the key-punch machines themselves and slow, erratic communications between bookmobiles and other library agencies. Key-punch machine malfunctioning is often attributable to the bookmobile environment ifself in that they often experience electric current variences and building movement and vibrations that are not problems in permanent building library installations. This situation at times causes other agencies to be hesitant to loan materials through a bookmobile that are of long term necessity in the agency collection. The same problem applies to basic collection-type materials in the bookmobile collection as well; however, the bookmobiles now under decentralization, consider the collection of the supervising branch library as their basic collection and draw upon it for bookmobile patrons needs, so the problem is intensified for these supervising branches.

These same problems very possibly would continue with a new circulation system employing the magnetic sensing machines.

3. Other factors of current circulation policies and procedures:

A. Overdue notices. Current level of overdue notices on bookmobile circulation amounts to costs of

$25.17 per week of $1,308.84 per year at the circulation level of 100,000 volumes circulated per year.

B. Fines on overdue materials returned. Though any fines collected do tend to defray cost-involved in collecting those fines the bookmobiles do collect far less fine money, both in gross amount and as a percentage of their circulation volume, than do other agencies of the library system.

From this point of view the costs of overdue notices and costs of collecting fines are excessive related to the activities of other agencies of the library system.

4. Inadequate materials budget: The materials budget for bookmobiles for fiscal 1973-74 of $500. per bookmobile, is not sufficient to even replace the current loss rate of hardbound books on the bookmobiles. The current statement of books lost in circulation for bookmobiles, would indicate that on a projected circulation of 100,000 for the 1973-74 year, a 1.1 percent loss rate of hardbounds experienced will produce a loss of 1100 books. Assuming that these losses are on the same percentage basis as used in building the collection, 65 percent adult materials, 35 percent juvenile and 5 percent young adult, those losses would amount to $5,019.85 at the current cost hardbound books in each category.

adult hardbound books:	660 @ $5.16 ea.	$3,405.60
juvenile " " :	385 @ $3.64 ea.	$1,401.40
young adult " " :	55 @ $3.87 ea.	$ 212.85
		5,019.85
current bookmobile budget:	4 @ $500. ea.	-2,000.00
Net loss over bookmobile budget		$3,019.85

The loss of $3,019.85 in hardbound books is a direct drain on the collections of the supervising branch as well as other agencies that may supply books on a demand basis for the bookmobiles.

Another implication of this loss rate and combines low funding is the difficulty of maintaining a fresh and varied selection of books for the bookmobile patrons.

A materials budget that would reflect an allocation for bookmobiles out of a total system budget of $200,000 based on percentage of system circulation would be $12,500., assuming the current bookmobile circulation rate of 6.25 percent of the total system circulation.

Further stress is placed on maintaining an adequate materials collection and controlling its circulation on bookmobiles by the higher circulation velocity of these collections compared to that of the library system as a whole.

Current experience indicated that the library system collection of 600,000 inventoried volumes (including items inventoried as "reference") is yielding an annual circulation of 1.6 million, or each volume circulates 2.67 times during the year. The bookmobiles currently have approximately 20,000 inventoried volumes that are actually assigned to their total collections and are estimated to produce 100,000 circulation in fiscal 1973-74; an average per volume circulation of 5.0 times during the year.

5. Inflexibility: The present circulation system and procedures are rather inflexible to special situations that arise on bookmobiles in different locations in serving special groups and special environments; among these are visits by school children in large numbers, wishing to check out books; areas in which the population may be low educational achievement and/or income level with corresponding inabilities to meet schedules, pay fines, and understandingly comply with procedures and policies. These problems could be anticipated to continue to some degree under the new circulation system now under consideration.

Conclusion: Many of the problems current with the bookmobile operations would seem to stem from their attempting to operate within the same overall framework as do the conventional agencies of the library system. Some of the known general facts concerning the bookmobiles and their operations would indicate possible feasibility of different approaches to the problem factors. For example, we know generally that the majority of the patron demand for materials from the bookmobile is of the popular, lighter type and that the number of volumes of materials circulated per hour open is significantly lower in the average than is true in most other of the library system agencies.

It is suggested that, as consideration of continuing to operate the bookmobiles within the same framework as other library agencies is continued, other possible approaches also be considered and explored. Recommended areas of exploration would include:

1. Making more of bookmobiles materials collections consist of lighter reading, in paperbound format.

2. Possible elimination of overdue notices and fines for overdue materials as an over-all cost effective measure.

3. Putting bookmobile on a separate circulation system of their own, perhaps including a hand written charging system.

Paul Little

OKLAHOMA COUNTY LIBRARIES

FEBRUARY 5, 1974

TOPICAL CATEGORY DESIGN OF BOOK COLLECTION
FOR BOOKMOBILE EXPERIMENT

CATEGORY	% OF TOTAL COLLECTION	
ADULT		
Philosophy and Psychology	02%	
Religion	01%	
Social Science/Folklore	05%	
Science	02%	
Medicine	02%	
Homes/Home Economics	05%	
Business	01%	
Arts/Crafts	04%	
Music/Drama	02%	
Games/Sports	04%	
Literature	02%	
History	04%	
Biography	06%	
Fiction (General)	20%	
Fiction (Mysteries)	10%	
Fiction (Westerns)	15%	
Fiction (Science-fiction)	05%	
Total Adult		90%
JUVENILE		
"Easy" books	03%	
Readers	02%	
Juvenile Fiction	05%	
Total Juvenile		10%

Appendix C

Oklahoma County Libraries System

Analysis of Return and Non-Return of Books Loaned to Patrons[1]

January, 1973

	Number of Weeks Lapsed After Date of Loan										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-26[2]
Percentage of Total Number of Books Loaned That Are Returned	8	20	33	20	3.4	1.7	.55	.59	.16	.73	.42
Percentage of Total Number of Books Loaned Remaining Unreturned	92	62	29	9	5.6	3.9	3.35	2.76	2.6	1.87	1.45

1 The average loan period is three weeks.

2 By the 26th week approximately 98.55 per cent of all books loaned have been returned. Approximately 1.45 per cent remain unreturned.

Oklahoma County Libraries
EXPERIMENTAL MANUAL CIRCULATION SYSTEM
BOOKMOBILES
February, 1974

Policy:

The Circulation Policy of the Oklahoma County Libraries is to apply to bookmobiles in respect to identifications of patrons and their eligibility to borrow materials. Therefore, from Section III of Oklahoma County Libraries Policy and Procedure Manual the following apply:

Item A: Circulation to Adult County Residents
Item B: Circualtion to Adult Non-County Residents
Item C: Library Identification Card for Students

As this experimental policy and procedure does not allow a mechanism for recording actual cost value of materials borrowed by patrons, charges for lost materials are as follows:

Adult Paperbacks	$1.00
Juvenile Paperbacks	.60
Adult Hardbacks	5.00
Juvenile Hardbacks	3.00

No fines are to be levied for books returned overdue.

Procedure:

To charge materials:

1. Patron completes a signature card.
2. Clerk checks signature card against the delinquent card file.
3. Clerk stamps date due on signature card.
4. Clerk stamps date due on slip in back of book.
5. Clerk writes the last three digits of signature card number adjacent to the date due in back of book.
6. Clerk indicates whether books borrowed are hardbound or paperbound.
7. Clerk writes book number on face of signature card.

8. Clerk files signature card in circulation box by date due and signature number sequence.

NOTE: Care must be taken with signature cards to ensure that for each date due there are no signature cards with the same last three digits. This could be a problem on holidays.

To discharge materials:

1. Clerk opens all books to the date due slip in the back.
2. Clerk arranges books by date due and signature numbers.
3. Clerk matches books to circulation file crossing through the corresopnding book number on the signature card. If all book numbers have been crossed through then signature card must be removed from file. This card may be discarded or used in analyzing circulation versus collection.

NOTE: Books which are 60 days or more past due must be cleared by using the delinquent cross-reference index-mentioned below.

To create and maintain delinquent file:

1. Clerk removes signature cards from circulation file which are 60 days or more past due.
2. Clerk writes date due, signature number and patron name in delinquent cross-reference index.
3. Clerk alphabetizes signature cards by patron name and files them in the delinquent card file.
4. Clerk periodically removes cards which are over a year old.

SPECIAL NOTE: Overdue notices may be typed for those few patrons who are abusing their borrowing privileges.

Applications for student borrower cards that are taken on the bookmobile will be retained in an alphabetic file on the bookmobile.

Borrower charge cards that have not been used for a

transaction in the past 12 months should be deleted from the file of current borrowers and discarded.

All bookmobile materials will circulate for a loan period of three weeks.

Bookmobile patrons may request materials at the bookmobile that are not a part of the bookmobile collection; these requests will be transmitted by the bookmobile clerk to their supervising branch for further handling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles & Periodicals:

Curley, Marie T. "The Buckram Syndrome," The Public Library Reporter, No. 13, 1968 (Chicago: American Library Association).

Lottman, Eileen. "Paperback: The Illegitmate Child Comes of Age," Publishers Weekly, (June 10, 1972).

Christian, Roger. "Paperbacks are Welcome Addition to Library," Mississippi Library News, (December, 1971), pp. 222-223.

Wakefield, Jacqueline M. and Hofmann, Catherine N. "Certifiable Lunacy or Common Sense?" Wilson Library Bullerin, (February, 1972), pp. 513-17.

Wilson Library Bulletin. "Another Library Eliminates Fines," 44:16 (September, 1969).

Clay, Sam. "To Fine or Not to Fine," Virginia Librarian, Vol. XVIII, No. 2 (Summer, 1971).

Library Journal. "Ontario 'No Fines' Policy Rated a Success by Library," (June 1, 1972).

Library Journal. "Honor System Experiments; Wins and Losses," 97:2681 (September 1, 1972).

Unpublished Material:

Oklahoma County Libraries. 1972-73 Circulation Records.

Other Sources:

Oklahoma County Libraries System. Personal interviews with Bookmobile personnel.